

The good Christian happy in Death.

A
S E R M O N

PREACHED AT
NEWBURY, MAY 28, 1780,

Occasioned by the Death of

Dr. JOHN COLLET,

Late Physician of that Place.

By DAVID JAMES.

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S E R M O N, &c.

THE service of the present opportunity is intended as a tribute of respect to the memory of the dead, and to convey instruction and benefit to the living. With the life and general character of Dr. John Collet, late physician in this town, few if any of you are unacquainted. Who that hath heard any thing of him, hath not also heard of the benignity and disinterestedness of his disposition, and of the courteousness and amiableness of his manners? It is not improbable but this slight retrospect to his character hath awakened in the minds of many of you mingled sentiments of affectionate respect, warm esteem, and lively gratitude. Possibly, on this mournful occasion, some may call to remembrance those restless days and sleepless nights when the raging fever, or some other disorder equally dangerous, was threatening a speedy dissolution, but, under God, obtained relief through
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his care and skill. Others may recollect not only his attention and assiduity in the line of his profession, but also his generous ardor and benevolence to relieve their necessities: and all who are present, that had the happiness of his acquaintance and conversation, will call to mind, with pensive regret, his open and placid countenance, his unaffected modesty, his obliging temper, and unassuming deportment.—The present service is to me a very mournful and affecting one. On so public an opportunity I dare not trust my feelings in speaking of his goodness, and my own obligations. Gratitude, duty, affection, friendship, all unite in calling upon me this day to do justice to approved worth, and un sullied integrity; but I feel myself unequal to the task of answering their demands in a manner corresponding to the solemnity of the occasion, and my own ideas and wishes. I need your candour and indulgence while I endeavour to suggest those considerations which religion furnishes to sooth our minds under the loss of virtuous connections, and affectionate friends, and in the prospect of our own approaching mortality. The words which have been pointed out to me for this purpose you will find in

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And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

A great deal of criticism has been employed to ascertain the genuine sense of these words. Without troubling you with the various interpretations which have been offered, I shall just mention that which seems most natural and obvious, and is generally received. The Apostle John having been shewn in vision the difficulties and dangers which were to bring the fortitude and patience of sincere christians to the severest trials, is directed to write, that from henceforth, they that were dead in the Lord were happier than the living who had such dangerous trials to encounter: *yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours*, those terrors and sufferings of persecution, and that variety of pain and trouble, to which the best of men are liable in the present world; and *their works* of piety and goodness *do follow* or accompany them. That passage of Solomon, in Ecc. iv. 2. is thought an illustration of this comment. *Wherefore I praised the dead which are already dead, more than the living which are*

yet alive. This was owing to the oppressions which the wise man considered as done under the sun*.

There is nothing that strikes a thoughtful and sensible mind more forcibly on a view of human life, than the insecurity of its enjoyments, and the certainty of its period. Neither power can protect, nor riches shield, nor virtue save from the intrusions of distress and pain. After escaping innumerable dangers, and using every mean that prudence suggested to prolong life, and render it agreeable, disease gradually makes its inroads on the constitution, and brings on death, which closes the scene of all earthly pursuits and pleasures. In contemplating this universal destiny, the studious and the wise, in every age, have anxiously sought for resources of fortitude and tranquility. Reason exerted her most strenuous efforts to account for the short and precarious tenure of human existence, and to ascertain its true ends. From the character of God, considered as a righteous and good being; from the present promiscuous state of things; from the expansive powers of the human mind, its conscious dignity and instinctive longings after immortality, reason inferred,

* The reader may consult Archbishop Tillotson's Sermons on the text, and Dr. Dodderidge's Family Expositor.

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that the thinking and reflecting part of man would subsist beyond the grave. She saw, or fancied she saw, virtue and goodness landed safe on the eternal shores, but clouds and shadows obscured her prospect. In an hour of pensive reflection on the triumphs of death, her doubts returned, and anxious suspense prevailed. This was the state of things in the heathen world among those who cultivated their reason by philosophy. In the *fulness of time*, it pleased the compassionate Father of the human race to send his beloved Son, with proper credentials to remove all doubt upon this most important of all subjects. Upon the principles and authority of the gospel it is certain, that death will not prove the extinction of our being. *Jesus is the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in him, though he were dead, yet shall he live. This is the record that God hath given to us eternal life: and this life is in his Son.* Supported by the animating prospect which christianity hath opened to us into a future and happy state of existence, we may comfort ourselves under the loss of pious relatives and virtuous friends. They are not lost; they are gone before into that country prepared by the eternal Father for the spirits of the just. *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord: they now rest from all their labours, sufferings, and anxieties:*
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their works of piety, faith, and benevolence are not forgotten; they follow them, and shall be amply rewarded by the grace of God, through Jesus Christ. Impressed with the unspeakable value of these assurances, let us adopt the words of St. Peter, and with hearts glowing with devout gratitude, say, *blessed be the God, and father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us.*

Two things present themselves to our consideration from the text :

First, the principles and character of those who die in the Lord.

Secondly, their blessedness.

The first subject of our consideration is the character of those who die in the Lord. — *To die in the Lord* is a phrase used in scripture in different meanings. In the text it may be understood to signify, dying in the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in a well-grounded expectation of the happiness which he has promised to his followers. From this comment it is an obvious inference, that *to live in the Lord* must signify to live according to the principles of that faith, and under the prevailing influence of such an expectation

pectation. It is an opinion which many seem disposed to entertain, that to have a title to the happiness which our Saviour has promised, nothing more is necessary than to avoid the commission of flagrant crimes, and to perform the common duties of their station; at the same time, that they are destitute of a principle of piety towards God, gratitude and obedience towards our Lord Jesus Christ, and a just concern for their eternal wellbeing: while others, in expectation of the same happiness, take refuge in the mercy of God, pious intentions, and a reliance of the merits of our Saviour, without exerting any endeavours to conform to his commands. I think it my duty to caution you against building your everlasting hopes on such precarious foundations. Two things are continually insisted upon in the New Testament as the indispensable requisites of salvation: *repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.* The first implies a conviction of demerit, regret for what has been wrong in the temper and conduct, and an application to God for pardon in the way of his appointment, accompanied with a real change of mind from sin to holiness. The second implies a cordial regard to Jesus Christ according to the various offices he is represented as sustaining in the scripture; as the revealer of
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the divine will ; the appointed mediator between God and man ; an allsufficient redeemer ; the pattern which we are to imitate, and our exalted Lord and Judge. Christianity is not to be considered as a system of opinions intended to amuse the speculative, and entertain the curious. The design of it is the recovery of men from a state of guilt to that of peace and favour with their maker by giving them affecting views of the evil and demerit of sin ; of the importance of regeneration and holiness ; the interposition of the eternal God for their salvation ; the humility and sufferings of the Redeemer ; the solemnities of judgment, and of the important consequences of final retribution. It is a plan of religious education formed on the model of our Saviour's life, and carried on by the influences of his spirit for improving our understandings, correcting the irregularity of our passions, refining our tempers, fitting us for acting an useful and a worthy part in life, and preparing us for the dignities and enjoyments of an everlasting state. Hence awful threatenings are denounced to rouse and deter, precious promises are given to encourage and allure, and a crown of glory is held forth as a reward to animate under difficulties and sufferings. Those who *live in the Lord* admit these views and act under their influence. It is
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acknowledged that among this number, there are many who entertain different apprehensions of several of the doctrines of christianity. This is unavoidable in the present state of imperfection, while there are different capacities, passions, prejudices, situations, and modes of education. Infalibility is the privilege of none. The best may err; and this is a reason for mutual forbearance and charity. It is a duty which every one owes to his maker, and himself, to judge and decide from scripture what is truth, that his faith may not stand on the wisdom of men, but on the revelation of God. There can be no real piety and goodness without integrity. Christian integrity consists in acting according to the best of our judgment after a sincere enquiry; in being open to conviction; and professing what appears to us to be divine truth with firmness, neither terrified by reproach, nor seduced by interest. Those who admit the influence of religious principles no further than is consistent with the indulgence of their passions, worldly convenience, or popular applause, deserve not the name of christians. They live not to the Lord, but to the world; and from the world they must expect their reward. *How can ye believe, said our Saviour to the Jews, who receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour*

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nour that cometh from God only? They want that which gives dignity to man, and value to religion—principle. Singleness of heart, honesty, and purity of intention, a love of truth and righteousness, an abhorrence of vice, a desire to know and to do the will of God independently of prevailing modes and customs, are the rare though essential parts of the christian character. What is piety without sincerity and uprightness? what is faith without virtue and benevolence?—It is true every human character is imperfect. Errors, inadvertencies, and frailties are the attendants of humanity in its most improved state: but these must be consistent with prevailing integrity to give stability to our hopes in the divine mercy. There was no man more ready to acknowledge his imperfections and faults than St. Paul, nor any that set a greater value on that constitution of divine grace for obtaining forgiveness and salvation through Jesus Christ; and yet he saith in his own name, and in that of the other apostles: *our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world†.**

* John v. 44.

† 2 Cor. i. 12.

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From these general observations we may now form a true idea of the principles and conduct of those who, upon scriptural ground, may hope to die in the Lord, and will have an interest in the blessings of his redemption. They are such as derive the principles of their faith from his doctrines, as laid down in the New Testament; are not ashamed of his gospel; openly avow their adherence to it; attend on its institutions, when health and circumstances allow; and conscientiously observe its ordinances. They have a serious and reverential regard to the spirit and manner in which their Lord conducted himself in the several circumstances and relations of life, in order to imitate him as far as their imperfection will admit.—He disregarded the riches and pomp of the world as objects of pursuit.—He was free from avarice, ambition, and sensuality.—His virtue was not sour, monkish, and austere, but gentle, humane, social.—He assumed no state—he sought no applause—he envied no man—he went about doing good, administering relief to the sick, and comfort to the afflicted.—To pride and vain glory he was a stranger—he was meek and lowly of heart—sympathised with those who were in distress—bore with the prejudices of the weak, and the follies of the ignorant—pitied the wicked—treated the poorest with the

most amiable condescension—never flattered the rich, nor artfully endeavoured to accommodate himself to their passions—was sincere in his professions, joining innocence with wisdom, and gentleness with integrity—forgave his enemies, and prayed for them.

Such were a few of the many amiable excellencies for which our Saviour was distinguished. In such excellencies all his disciples should endeavour to resemble him, though they may never equal him. If we have known any whom we have had great reason to think *loved him in sincerity*, and bore a likeness to him in the dispositions and virtues now mentioned, we must acknowledge, that they are entitled to the character of those who lived in the Lord, and in their death might humbly hope for that blessedness which he promised to his faithful servants. This brings us to the

Second subject of consideration from the text, The happiness of those who die in the Lord. When we see those who were the ornaments of human nature, and distinguished for their probity and benevolence, finishing their earthly career, and falling under the dominion of death, we are anxious to know whether there is a total end to all their virtues and acquisitions. To relieve our anxiety, we have an assurance from heaven that they are *blessed*; blessed now in part, and will

will be completely so at the resurrection, when that which is *corruptible shall put on incorruption*, and that which is mortal shall put on immortality.—*Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours.* The present state is but one scene of labour and anxiety with respect to something or other. There is no man perfectly satisfied in his situation. There is always some inconvenience which we wish to avoid, some trouble which we wish to remove, and some good which we are solicitous to procure. Eager in the chace of some distant enjoyment, we encounter dangers and surmount difficulties, but come short of the object of our pursuit; or, if obtained, it disappoints our expectation. Our bodies are liable to external injuries, or to latent disorders which no prudence can foresee, no care prevent. Our minds are no less subject to painful impressions from external circumstances, and the tumult and violence of our passions. In the most envied stations there is some source of disquiet, something that palls or embitters, some secret worm which preys upon the little stock of human felicity. “Man never is, but always to be blest.” The present state is made thus to abound with occasions of uneasiness to teach man the necessity of disciplining his passions, and to raise his views to that state of complete

plete rest, which remaineth for the people of God, and to prepare for it. There every sorrow is hushed, and every trouble extinguished. No longer tossed on the sea of life by afflicting storms, those *that died in the Lord*, have reached the haven of peace in safety. There no fear disturbs, no care molests, no calamity oppresses. They are equally above the reach of the temptations as the evils of life.—*And their works shall follow, or accompany them.* This is a circumstance in the blessedness of the righteous that deserves our particular regard. All works of human ingenuity and labour are perishing. Those which are the boast of pride, and the pomp of power, and the magnificence and splendour of riches, soon decay. *Even the world itself passeth away, and the fashion thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever, and his works accompany him.* They neither moulder by time, nor are destroyed by death. Their blessed effects extend to realms beyond the grave, and, through the grace of God in the Redeemer, enrich him who performed them through everlasting ages. “ When
“ all the works of the earth shall perish,
“ and the earth itself shall be burnt up,
“ and the very elements shall melt with
“ fervent heat, even then shall wisdom and
“ goodness lift up their heads, and triumph
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“ gloriously over the wreck of nature, and
 “ the ruin of the world. Those deceitful
 “ objects which men are so fond of in this
 “ world cannot follow or accompany them
 “ into another; but the good habits and
 “ dispositions which they have, through
 “ the grace of God, acquired, shall follow
 “ them, and be their ornament, their joy
 “ and their glory for ever. We are apt to
 “ look upon these riches of the soul as a
 “ kind of thin unsubstantial shadowy pos-
 “ sessions, while things sensible and corpo-
 “ real appear firm and permanent; but the
 “ final event will shew our mistake, what
 “ we may look upon now as the substance
 “ will prove a mere shadow, and what now
 “ passes with many for an empty shadow
 “ will be found the only true and substan-
 “ tial good. When the former shall have
 “ undergone a total dissolution, be entirely
 “ converted into dust and ashes, and the
 “ place thereof shall be no where found, the
 “ latter shall remain undecayed and flourish
 “ more and more through endless ages.”

*Say ye then to the righteous, that it shall be
 well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of
 their doings. Wo unto the wicked, it shall be
 ill with him for the reward of his hands shall
 be given him*.*—God will render unto every

* Isa. iii. 10, 11.

man according to his deeds*.—*I saw, saith St. John, the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works†.—He that sowed sparingly shall then reap sparingly, and he that sowed bountifully shall then reap bountifully‡. Some shall obtain a prophet's reward; others a righteous man's reward; and he who from a worthy motive gave a cup of cold water to a disciple, or was in such low circumstances as to be able to throw but two mites into the treasury of God's kingdom, shall not lose his reward§. His Lord said unto him, well done, good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord||.—Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, come, ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me:*

* Rom. ii. 6.

† Rev. xx. 12.

‡ 2 Cor. ix. 6.

§ Matt. x. 42. Luke xxi. 2.

|| Matt. xxv. 23.

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I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee: or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? and the king shall answer and say unto them, verily I say unto you, inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*

The sacred scriptures, while they, in this manner, give us full assurance of the future reward of the truly pious and good, yet enter but sparingly into a description of the particulars of which it will consist. Nor need this concern us, as God, who perfectly knoweth our frame, cannot fail to suit objects to those faculties which he hath given us, so as to render us completely happy. They gave us intimations that our future happiness will consist in the increase of our knowledge, in an intercourse with God, and our Saviour, and with the spirits of the just made perfect. It is a happiness which is to arise from society with the virtuous, wise, and benevolent. The intercourse which we have with one another in the present state is very often the occasion of much uneasiness

* Matt. xxv. 34—40.

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and trouble. We suffer from the pride, folly, and ill behaviour of those connected with us; sometimes they distress us by their afflictions; sometimes by their imprudences and wrong pursuits: but in that state where they that die in the Lord reside, there will be no frailties and errors, no follies and injuries. Every wrong passion will be corrected, and those inconveniencies and troubles which are attendants upon the most improved state of society on earth, will be forever removed. Every one will be happy in himself in a manner suited to his capacity and improvements, and disposed to contribute his part toward the happiness of those connected with him. *Blessed* then are they that *die in the Lord*, who are admitted to this society, and are rendered partakers of a felicity which pains and calamities cannot affect, and time cannot impair, and which will be continually improving through the revolving ages of eternity.

How thankful should we be for the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ which contains these valuable discoveries respecting the future state of good men, and how consolatory under the loss of pious friends and relatives! They are dead, but their souls are in the hands of God, and no evil can reach them. Our loss is their gain. They are removed from a state of sin, sorrow, pain,
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and trouble, into a state of peace, comfort, and enjoyment. They are blessed. Their reward is with the Lord. Their works of piety, righteousness, and charity accompany them. They are joined to the society of the spirits of the just, freed from weakneses and imperfections. They are secure under his care and protection who hath the *keys of the invisible world and the grave*, and who is able to keep that which has been committed to him. *None can pluck them out of his hands: his father who gave them to him is greater than all, and none can pluck them out of his father's hands; he and his father are one: they are jointly concerned in their safety.*

The present subject shews us the great importance and advantage of having an interest in the blessings of redemption, by true repentance, and a faith which worketh by love, and purifieth the heart, and overcometh the world. Death is the unavoidable lot of man. It will not be many years before every one of us shall enter the dark and narrow dwelling of the grave, when our connection with every earthly concern will be dissolved, when our names, after a time, will be forgotten among the living, and the places which now know us will know us no more. Let the awful providence which hath brought many of us to this place on the present occasion excite us

to live henceforth to the Lord, that we may die in him. *Let us fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into the rest of God, any of us should seem to come short of it through inattention, negligence, or sin.* It is in the exercise of sincere piety, and a conscientious discharge of the duties of life, in a humble dependence on the grace of God, that a title to future happiness is to be secured. If sincerity of heart and uprightness of conduct be wanting it matters not what religious opinions we maintain, or to what denomination of Christians we belong, our religion is vain, and our hopes delusive.

The present subject further admonishes us, that as our works will accompany us into a state beyond the grave, it should be our care and endeavour, by the grace of God, to abound in those which are virtuous, benevolent, and holy: not that we are to consider them as meritorious in the sight of God: on the contrary, our Saviour hath taught us that if we were to do every thing required of us, yet, with respect to our Maker, we should be unprofitable servants. The promises of glory, honour, and immortality in the New Testament, originated in God's innate benevolence and liberality; and so great is his condescension and mercy, that those works of faith and obedience
which

which he enables us to perform, and which are the only genuine proofs of our sincerity and uprightness, he bountifully rewards through Jesus Christ, not only beyond our deserts, but our natural hopes. *God is not unrighteous, or unfaithful, saith the apostle, to forget your work and labour of love which ye have shewn toward his name**. Confident that no well meant intention will escape his favourable notice, let us endeavour to abound in those pursuits which are honest and just, pure and lovely, and of good report. Every one will receive in proportion to the improvements he hath made, the trials he hath undergone, and the proofs he has given of real piety and goodness, according to the nature of his capacity, and the station he filled. This important truth cannot but give sensible satisfaction to every upright heart that is solicitous to please God in all things. Let us all be persuaded to do good as we have opportunity, and faithfully improve the several talents committed to us; that when we take our final leave of all those objects which human pride, ambition, and vanity pursue with insatiable ardor, and close our intercourse with the present state, we may enter the world of spirits with the testimony of a good conscience, that we have

* Heb. vi. 10.

not neglected the most useful and important purposes of life, and may humbly hope, notwithstanding our manifold imperfections, for acceptance into eternal life, through the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

You are all sensible of the awful event which has given occasion to these admonitions. The removal of that worthy and amiable man, whose name I have already mentioned, is a call of providence to his relatives, his particular friends and acquaintance, to consider the end of all living, and to imitate him in those excellencies of temper for which he was esteemed and deservedly respected. Characters in funeral sermons lie under a degree of disgrace, as they have too often deserved no better name than prostituted praise. Panegyric hath taken the place of truth, and virtues have been attributed to persons who never practised them, either to please mourning relatives, or to shew the talents of the preacher. Neither of these temptations at present affects me. Being fully persuaded that many on this occasion would be greatly disappointed at the total omission of the particulars of a character, where simple truth is praise; and hoping that a recital of virtues generally acknowledged to have been exemplified, may excite others to go and do likewise; I am induced, contrary to my usual custom, to mention

tion some particulars relating to my much honoured friend, of the truth of which I am perfectly satisfied.

Dr. John Collet was descended of a reputable family. He was born on the fifth of July, 1708, in London. Blessed in a Father whose reverence for revealed religion was shewn by his diligent study of its discoveries, and by some useful publications which were well received; and also in an uncle who was for some years a governor in two of our settlements in the East Indies, and whose conduct was an honour to his station; he, in early years, imbibed those sentiments of religion and virtue which laid the foundation for the exercise of that probity and goodness for which he was distinguished through his whole life. In his youth he was tractable and orderly, fond of learning, and rapid in his progress in it. The knowledge of the classics and other branches of literature he acquired under Dr. Ward, afterward professor at Gresham college; and Mr. Weston, who kept an academy at Greenwich. From the place last mentioned he went to Trinity Hall, Cambridge, in April 1725, to finish his classical education. Sometime in the year 1727 he went to Leyden, in Holland, to study under the celebrated Boerhaave, and to qualify himself for the profession of physic. After attending the usual course

course of lectures in that university, and approving himself to his superiors by his application and progress in his studies, he took his doctor's degree on July the fifth, 1731. Quitting Leyden he visited several cities and towns on the continent; staid for some time at Paris in order to avail himself of the advantages which that city afforded for improvement in the practical part of dispensing medicine, as he afterward did at London. Being thus qualified for discharging the duties of a physician, several places were proposed to him by his friends in which his knowledge and skill might be exercised. After some deliberation he fixed upon Newbury, and came here in July 1733, having a few days before been admitted a licenciate by the college of physicians in London. Here he continued from that time till his death, except about six years which he spent at Brentford and Uxbridge*. In what manner he has demeaned himself during his residence among us, how virtuously, unblameably, and usefully, most of you are sensible. His skill and success in his profession were indicated by his extensive practice for a great number of years. From the natural benignity of his temper he was ever ready to afford every assistance in his power to relieve

* These particulars were not mentioned when the sermon was delivered.

the afflicted, and that without regard to distinctions occasioned by outward circumstances. The poor in a thousand instances have experienced his humanity and compassion, not only in removing their pains, but in granting supplies to their indigence.

Exclusive of his peculiar province as a physician, his knowledge was various, and his reading extensive*. The laws of the universe, the order and revolutions of the heavenly bodies, and the phœnomèna and productions of the earth in different climates, were to him subjects of pleasing contemplation, as they enlarged his views of the majesty and goodness of the maker omnipotent, whom he adored with the profoundest reverence, and by a regard to whose will the tenor of his conduct was regulated. The annals of human society from the stages of rude simplicity in its progress to civilization and the highest refinement, the polity and customs of nations, the efforts and advantages of industry, the blessings of liberty and peace, never failed to attract his attention. When, from the investigations of philosophy, or the ingenuity of art, any thing was discovered which promised benefit and advantage to mankind, his mind laid

* Among his papers there are several manuscripts on different subjects, some of which may possibly, at one time or another, be submitted to the eye of the public.

hold of it with eagerness, and diffused the knowledge of it among his acquaintance as extensively as circumstances allowed. This was owing to that generous and ardent spirit of philanthropy which pervaded his whole social conduct.

His regard to revealed religion was the result of examination and conviction. His acquaintance with it was critical. He studied the Old Testament in the original language, and made a greater proficiency in that branch of literature than many of those whose time is professedly appropriated to sacred subjects. The New Testament contained to him a treasure of divine knowledge. From it he deduced the principles of his faith, and upon the declarations and promises of it he built his hopes of acceptance and salvation. Uninfluenced by the corrupt maxims of a degenerate age, and that fashionable indifference to every thing styled sacred and important, he publickly professed himself a Christian, and made the example of his great master the model of his temper and conduct. Among other excellencies, he resembled him in avoiding ostentation, and shunning applause; in being meek and lowly in heart; and in going about to do good. Though connected with those who moved in the higher ranks of life, and a frequent witness of the parade of
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riches, yet the guileless simplicity of his manners continued unaltered, and he retained that moderation and contentment, that candor and disinterestedness, which those who mix much with the world are seldom observed to do.—His piety was rational and affectionate, equally remote from bigotry as enthusiasm. He manifested his attachment to religion by his stated attendance on its ordinances while his infirmities permitted him. His benevolence was as universal as the human race. It was his favourite motto *homo sum, &c.* “I am a man, and think nothing foreign to me which affects humanity.”

If piety could save, or goodness defend its votaries from the assaults of pain and affliction, his health would have been uninterrupted, and his life extended to its most distant period. But the present state is not a state of impartial retribution. The servants of God, and the benefactors of men, have often great difficulties to struggle with, and severe trials to undergo, before they are called to their eternal home. They are not, however, left without resources of peace and consolation under them. There is an overruling providence, the assistance of God's spirit, and the prospect of eternal glory, to sooth, support, and animate the pious and upright mind under sufferings. Knowing

that the present state is not a state of unmingled happiness, the wise and good do not expect it. They foresee changes from the constitution of human nature, and the state of the world, and therefore are in some measure prepared for them. They therefore, in the honest discharge of their duty, commit themselves to God, and leave events to his disposal; being persuaded that he will be the *rewarder of them that diligently seek him*; and that *all the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed*. These resources of peace and hope our deceased friend was possessed of. Under those infirmities which deprived him of his active usefulness, and the excruciating pains of the gout and stone, he was resigned to the will of God. When the paroxysms of those disorders were past, his cheerfulness returned. There was no load of guilt to oppress his mind, no misgivings and self-reproaches in the review of an useless or ill-spent life to embitter his calamities. He was conscious of no bad designs. He trusted in the mercy and care of God according to the promises of the gospel. He was persuaded that if acute pains were borne with submission to the divine will, and religiously improved, they would work a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory to the sufferer.

With

With humble resignation and hope he patiently waited the dread hour which closes all intercourse with the present world, and puts a period to all earthly concerns. His illness was but short, and he died in the Lord on the twelfth of May, in the seventy-second year of his age, and is gone to partake of the blessedness of those who have served God in sincerity.

Such was the man whose death gave occasion to the present sermon. An entire stranger to his life and conversation might naturally imagine that all which has been said relating to him was nothing more than the laboured eulogium of fiction, the fulsome incense of flattery, so customary on these occasions; but I dare appeal to all who truly knew him whether this essay on his character doth not come greatly short of the amiableness of the original. What would be deemed distinguished praise to others is to him but simple justice. His character and reputation are so fair as not to stand in need of the adventitious colourings of flattery. Frailties undoubtly he had as a man, but they were not of such a nature as to detract from the truth of what has been now related. To know him was to esteem him. His removal is the loss of his relatives and friends, but without question *his unspeakable gain.* *Blessed are the dead who have died in*
the

the Lord; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works accompany them. Their prayers and their alms are gone up for a memorial before God. He will not forget their works and labour of love which they have shewn towards his name.

With sorrow and affection we now take our public leave of our honoured friend. Dear he was to several of us. Let his virtues live long in our remembrance, and let us imitate him in that sincerity which was free from guile; that humility and meekness which were unaffected; that devotion which was rational and fervent; that candor, peaceableness, compassion, humanity, and integrity, which were distinguished features in his character. *Let us be followers of them who through faith and patience are gone to inherit the promises.* There is a period not far distant when we shall rejoin those with whom we have spent some of our best days, who divided our cares, and lessened our sorrows, and doubled our joys by sympathy and counsel, provided we act not in such a manner during our probation as to be deemed unworthy of their society. Let us resolve so to conduct ourselves through life, that, after death, our names may be mentioned with honour, and we may renew that friendship which was begun on earth in the assembly of the just made perfect, and which will
never

never more be dissolved. May all who have been brought hither on the present occasion, whether from curiosity, respect, gratitude, affection, duty, or from whatever motive, depart hence in the firm persuasion that there is no true peace without virtue, no lasting happiness without God, no settled tranquillity and comfort under the adverse occurrences of life without an interest in the promises of divine mercy through Jesus Christ! *O that we may be wise to understand this, and consider our latter end!* Beloved brethren and sisters, permit me to close this address in admonishing you and myself to be steadfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, from a firm assurance that our labour in the Lord shall not be in vain.

F I N I S.

1871
The following is a list of the names of the persons who have been admitted to the membership of the Society since the last meeting of the Council, viz. the 1st of January 1871. The names are given in the order in which they were admitted, and are followed by the date of their admission, and the name of the person by whom they were introduced. The names of the persons who have been admitted to the membership of the Society since the last meeting of the Council, viz. the 1st of January 1871, are given in the order in which they were admitted, and are followed by the date of their admission, and the name of the person by whom they were introduced.

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